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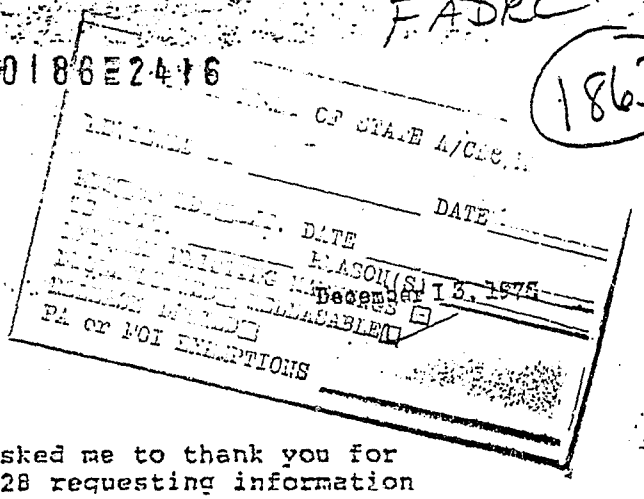

Dear Mr. Lott:

The Secretary has asked me to thank you for your letter of November 28 requesting information about the U.S. response to the Guyana tragedy.

On Sunday, November 19, it had become clear that the United States Government was facing a major crisis in Guyana. An American Congressman and other Americans in his party had been killed. A settlement believed to include over 1,000 Americans was involved, and its situation was uncertain. It was apparent that the Government of Guyana required assistance in handling a major emergency created by the presence of Americans within its borders.

The President, acting under his constitutional authority as Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, ordered the departments of our government to take action to deal with this emergency. The operational decisions within the U.S. Government in this unique situation were made by the Secretary of State in conjunction with some of his Cabinet colleagues.

Under the President's Executive authorities, medical evacuation for injured Americans was immediately ordered, and the United States Government offered assistance to the Government of Guyana to prevent further loss of life.

The Honorable
Trent Lott,
House of Representatives.

As events progressed, it became clear that there were large numbers of Americans dead. For a time, it was believed that there were survivors in the jungle; and the United States adjusted and increased its assistance to help the search by Guyana police and military. Finally, when the full scope of the tragedy of Jonestown was clear, our Government was requested by the Government of Guyana to remove the bodies. This operation was considered essential in handling the emergency situation which existed in Guyana at the time.

The Justice Department is fully exploring possible legal remedies which can be used to recover the cost the U.S. Government has incurred in removing and processing the bodies of Americans from Guyana. Now that the emergency is substantially over, the Office of Management and Budget and other agencies are reviewing the various operations to determine the exact cost to the United States Government. Although the costs to the United States Government of an effort of this magnitude obviously are considerable, they are substantially lower than the $8 million figure used in some press reports. Please be assured that we will report fully to appropriate congressional committees on these aspects of the operation upon completion of our review. Meanwhile, the Justice Department will make all efforts to recover the costs to the U. S. Government.

If you have any further questions, you may wish to contact Deputy Assistant Secretary John Bushnell in our Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, whose telephone number is 632-8562.

Sincerely,

DB/GW

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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November 28, 1978

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ACTION
is assigned to
ARA

Honorable Cyrus Vance
Secretary of State
2201 C Street
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have received a number of letters and telegrams from my constituents expressing great concern about the use of federal funds to transport the survivors and bodies of the recent tragedy in Guyana to the United States. I concur in the opinions expressed by these taxpayers, and, considering the reports of the wealth of the so-called People's Temple. I want to urge you to do all that you can to seek repayment of funds expended by the United States for transferral and treatment of the deceased, housing and protection of the survivors, and transportation of the survivors within the United States.

I look forward to having your comments on this matter. Thanking you, and with best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Trent Lott

Trent Lott

TL:mrt

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